

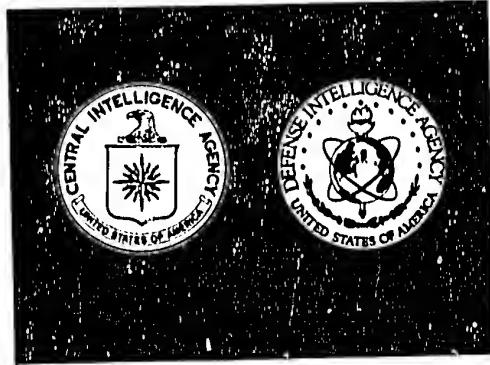
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Survey of Communist Military Developments in Indochina

DIA review(s) completed.

Secret

November 21, 1974

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SURVEY OF COMMUNIST
MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS IN INDOCHINA*

(This report covers the period
November 7-20, 1974)

The Key Points

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- There have been major changes in the status of Communist forces in southern South Vietnam, creating new threat areas.

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- ARVN ammunition expenditure rates during October declined substantially, indicating both a major effort to conserve ammunition and a low level of activity.
- Khmer Communist preparations for military activity suggest a near-term continuation of their provincial strategy.

* This report has been prepared jointly by the Central Intelligence Agency and the Department of Defense.

November 21, 1974

Preface

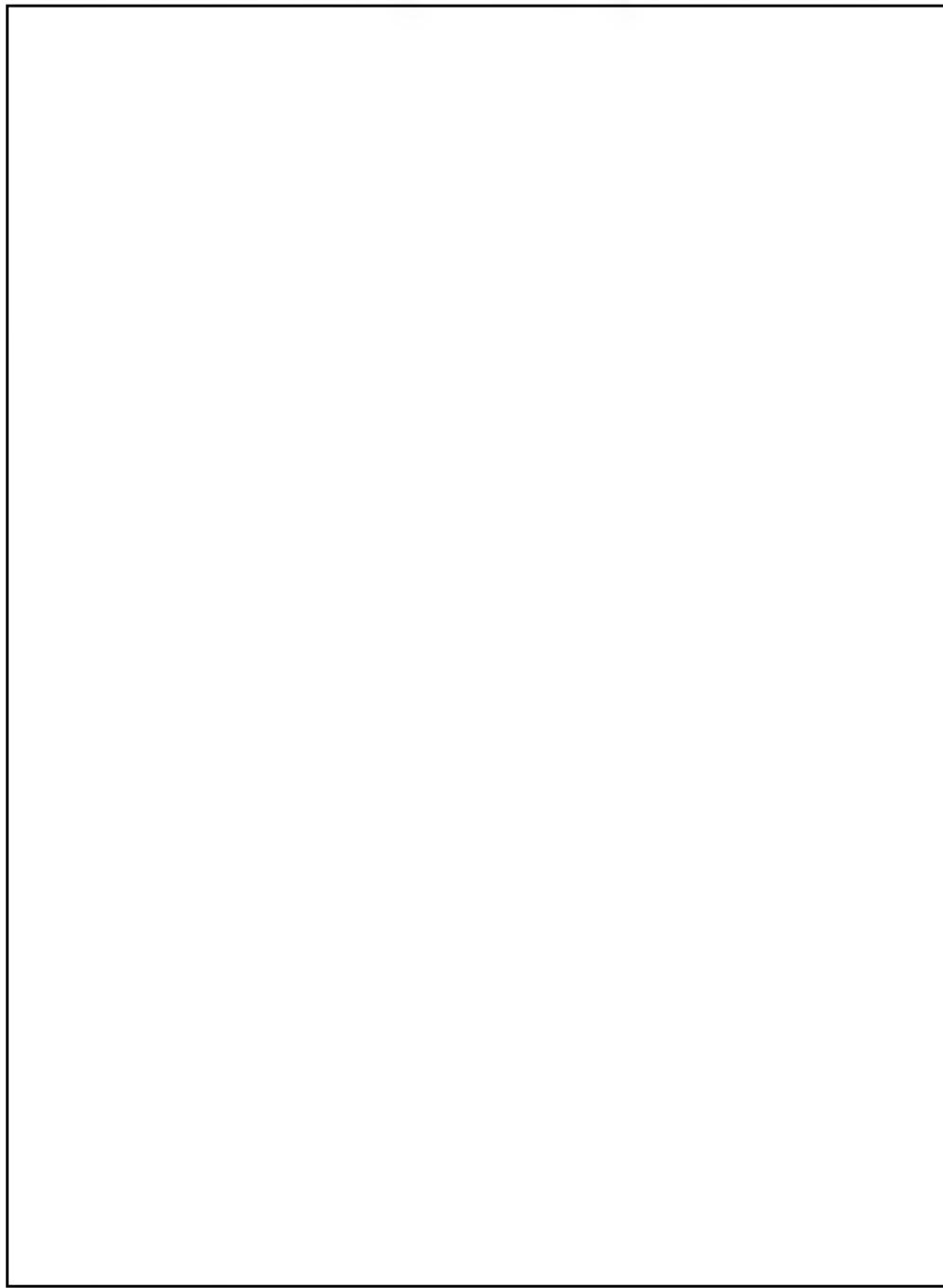
This report summarizes evidence received during the reporting period of
(I) Communist efforts to infiltrate new manpower and military supplies toward
and into South Vietnam, (II) significant Communist combat activity, and
(III) other developments affecting Communist military capabilities in Indochina.

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Redeployments

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6. [REDACTED] Communist
units in southern South Vietnam are undergoing major changes in status. By



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apparently creating a new division in MR 3, redeploying major elements of two other divisions to new areas of operation, [redacted]

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25X1 [redacted] the Communists have increased the threat to South Vietnam in two new areas, while weakening the threat in western MR 3 (see sections below).

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COSVN Forms a New Division in Eastern MR 3

25X1 8. [redacted] a new division, probably designated the 303d, is in the process of being formed in the Bien Hoa/Long Khanh area from existing units in MR 3. The division reportedly will consist of the 33d and 274th Regiments mentioned above and the 116th Sapper Regiment. Although this would not appreciably change the overall Communist strength in MR 3, it would enable the Communists to more effectively coordinate the operations of their tactical units. The creation of the division would show an increased Communist interest in Bien Hoa and Long Khanh Provinces. As a result, RVNAF may now have to contend with a new military front northeast of Saigon.

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II. Combat Activity in South Vietnam

16. During the past two weeks, combat activity in South Vietnam increased to a daily average of 101 cease-fire violations, compared with an average of 71 during the previous period.

17. The heaviest fighting continued to be reported in MR 1, as ARVN forces concluded two successful large-scale operations. On November 8, ARVN airborne units recaptured Hill 1062, a key terrain feature near the Communist-held district capital of Thuong Duc. The same day, elements of the ARVN 2d Division conducted a successful assault on Hill 405 overlooking Hau Duc district town in Quang Tin Province, recapturing the hill, which had been occupied by Communist troops for 18 days. A new effort to retake Mo Tau Mountain in Thua Thien Province has been ordered by the military region commander, but the outlook for success in this undertaking appears doubtful. The NVA/VC conducted a successful attack on a Regional Force (RF) battalion near Son Tinh in Quang Ngai Province on November 11, leaving some 120 RF troops killed, wounded, or missing.

18. In MR 3, on November 20, elements of the ARVN 12th Division successfully concluded an operation initiated on November 14 to recapture Rach Bap in Ben Cat District. Attacking units met only light resistance in the operation. The Communists' monthly high point in MR 4 occurred as usual, producing a distinct upsurge in incidents. Most of the action consisted of small unit attacks

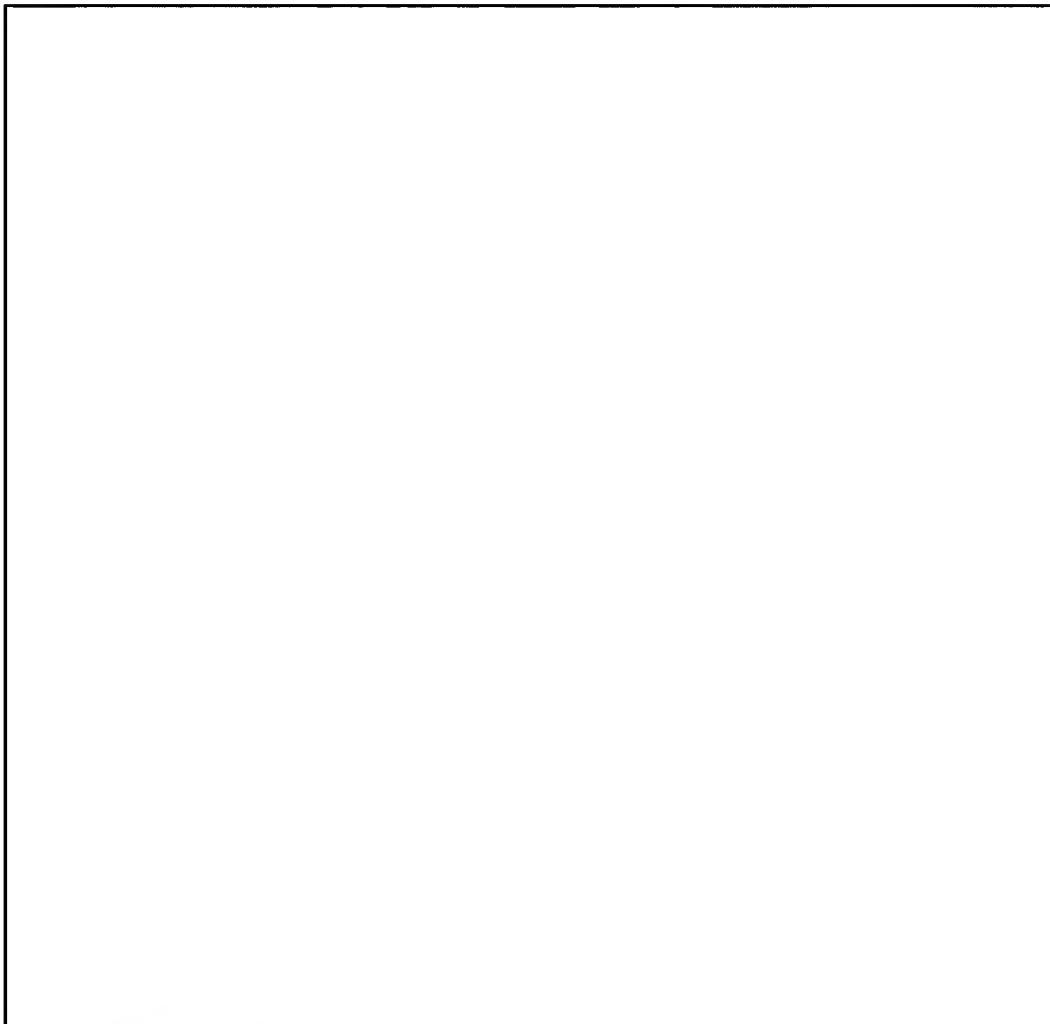
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against isolated outposts and of sapper and terrorist attacks. The most significant incident was the infiltration of an ARVN ammunition storage facility at Moc Hoa in Kien Tuong Province by Communist sappers, resulting in destruction of approximately 500 tons of mixed small-arms, mortar, and artillery ammunition.

III. Other Developments Affecting Communist Military Capabilities in Indochina



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Another Conscription Drive in North Vietnam

22. Hanoi is conducting its second conscription drive in four months. The new campaign seems to be directed at refilling training camps that are scheduled



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to send many of their troops to South Vietnam in the next few weeks. Training units in the Hanoi-Thanh Hoa area have already formed more than half a dozen new battalions, and others probably exist.

[redacted] 25X1

24. This latest campaign, which began in mid-October, appears to be widespread, but there is no sense of urgency in the reporting. Although the media claim that many localities have reached or exceeded their assigned quotas in the drives, there was evidence in late September that Hanoi was having some recruiting difficulties. These problems may be one reason Hanoi has held a second drive so soon after the one held in late summer. Nonetheless, as in previous years these campaigns generally are designed to provide Hanoi with enough trained personnel to meet its manpower needs in the south and maintain unit strengths in the north.

Khmer Communist Early Dry Season Activity

25. Current Khmer Communist (KC) force deployments, the pattern of ammunition shipments, [redacted] all point to a continuation, at least in the near term, of the "provincial strategy" followed by the Communists since the failure of their offensive against Phnom Penh last January. In general, this strategy calls for attacking provincial towns, severing major lines of communication (including the Mekong and Tonle Sap Rivers), and keeping government troops in the area around Phnom Penh on the defensive. At present, the KC do not appear to be planning a major offensive against Phnom Penh itself.

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26. In MR 203 (see the map), the KC have concentrated at least five regiments around the encircled city of Svay Rieng - the largest government-held population area east of the Mekong. In recent weeks, they have rocketed Svay Rieng regularly,

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[redacted] Although FANK forces in the area still enjoy a numerical superiority, the Communists reportedly have formed two new regiments near Svay Rieng and may move additional forces there from Prey Veng. Apparently to support this buildup and alleviate shortages, ammunition shipments were scheduled for this area in mid-November.

[redacted] 25X1

Khmer Communist Military Regions



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27. Elsewhere in the region, the Communists will apparently continue their attacks against government positions near the Mekong opposite Phnom Penh. The reported recent reorganization of KC forces in this area notwithstanding, KC capabilities will probably remain limited in the short term, as most units are understrength.

28. Parts of MR 506 also are projected to be KC focal points in the upcoming weeks. [redacted]

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29. Despite the lack of emphasis on major ground operations against Phnom Penh, [redacted]

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In the Bassac-Mekong corridor, for example, the KC probably will try to reestablish positions for rocketing Phnom Penh. As a result of the moderate progress made by FANK in expanding their territory since late August, most recent KC rockets have fallen short of their target. Because the KC main force units principally responsible for the area have suffered heavy casualties, the Communists are not expected to make extensive gains in the near future. Interdiction of the Mekong probably will be a prime objective of KC forces once water levels decline substantially -- normally by the end of December. As in MR 203, there have been severe shortages of ammunition in the areas surrounding Phnom Penh, but new shipments could overcome the problem.

ARVN and NVA Ammunition Expenditures During October

30. ARVN and NVA ammunition expenditures dropped sharply in October -- the second consecutive month they have declined. ARVN forces fired an average of 6,780 artillery rounds a day, down 34% from September's rate, and 55% below the 1974 high of 15,200 rounds fired daily in August. Communist forces countered with 900 rounds daily of artillery, rocket, recoilless rifle, and mortar ammunition in October, about 22% less than September's expenditures and 38% below their yearly high of 1,460 rounds daily recorded in August.

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31. As the table below indicates, ARVN artillery expenditures in October dropped most significantly in MRs 1, 2, and 3, while the sharpest reductions in Communist expenditures occurred in MRs 1 and 3. Despite the substantial decline in ARVN and NVA expenditures of ammunition in MR 1, however, the greater part of the firings continued to occur in this region. In October, MR 1 accounted for one-half of ARVN's total expenditures and about three-fourths of the NVA's.

Daily ARVN and NVA Ammunition Expenditures
in South Vietnam, 1974

| | Rounds | | | | |
|--|---------|--------|--------|--------|-------|
| | Jan-Jun | July | Aug | Sep | Oct |
| ARVN artillery | | | | | |
| Total | 9,920 | 10,200 | 15,200 | 10,250 | 6,780 |
| MR 1 | 610 | N.A. | N.A. | 4,290 | 3,370 |
| MR 2 | 2,640 | N.A. | N.A. | 2,190 | 970 |
| MR 3 | 3,150 | N.A. | N.A. | 2,200 | 990 |
| MR 4 | 3,520 | N.A. | N.A. | 1,570 | 1,450 |
| NVA artillery, rocket, recoilless rifle, and mortar¹ | | | | | |
| Total | 420 | 1,040 | 1,460 | 1,150 | 900 |
| MR 1 | 110 | 540 | 860 | 870 | 660 |
| MR 2 | 90 | 230 | 340 | 70 | 90 |
| MR 3 | 150 | 160 | 200 | 130 | 80 |
| MR 4 | 70 | 110 | 60 | 80 | 70 |

1. Reported NVA expenditures are preliminary and incomplete and should be used only to indicate trends.

32. Significantly, ARVN is now using artillery ammunition at a lower rate than during the first six months of 1974, while Communist forces are still expending more than twice as much heavy weapons ammunition as they did during the first six months. This suggests that ARVN's efforts in October to conserve artillery ammunition were more responsible for reduced expenditures than the low rate of combat.

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the North Vietnamese continue to undertake construction activities of a long-term nature, indicating a lack of immediate concern about air strikes in North Vietnam (see the report of August 15). Preparations for construction of what could be a major rail and road bridge over the Red River, six miles northwest of Hanoi,

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[redacted] the North Vietnamese still have large numbers of weapons in open storage. No noticeable buildup or draw-down of weapons was observed at the major artillery and armor storage areas from the previous month. In South Vietnam, however, some 25 armored vehicles (including a possible self-propelled, quad-mounted 23-mm antiaircraft weapon never before positively identified in the South) [redacted]

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35. In other developments, the petroleum pipeline possibly has been extended 25 miles south from Communist Route 14 in Daklak Province in MR 2 through extreme eastern Cambodia to within one mile of Quang Duc Province (see the transportation map). [redacted]

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August HES Results

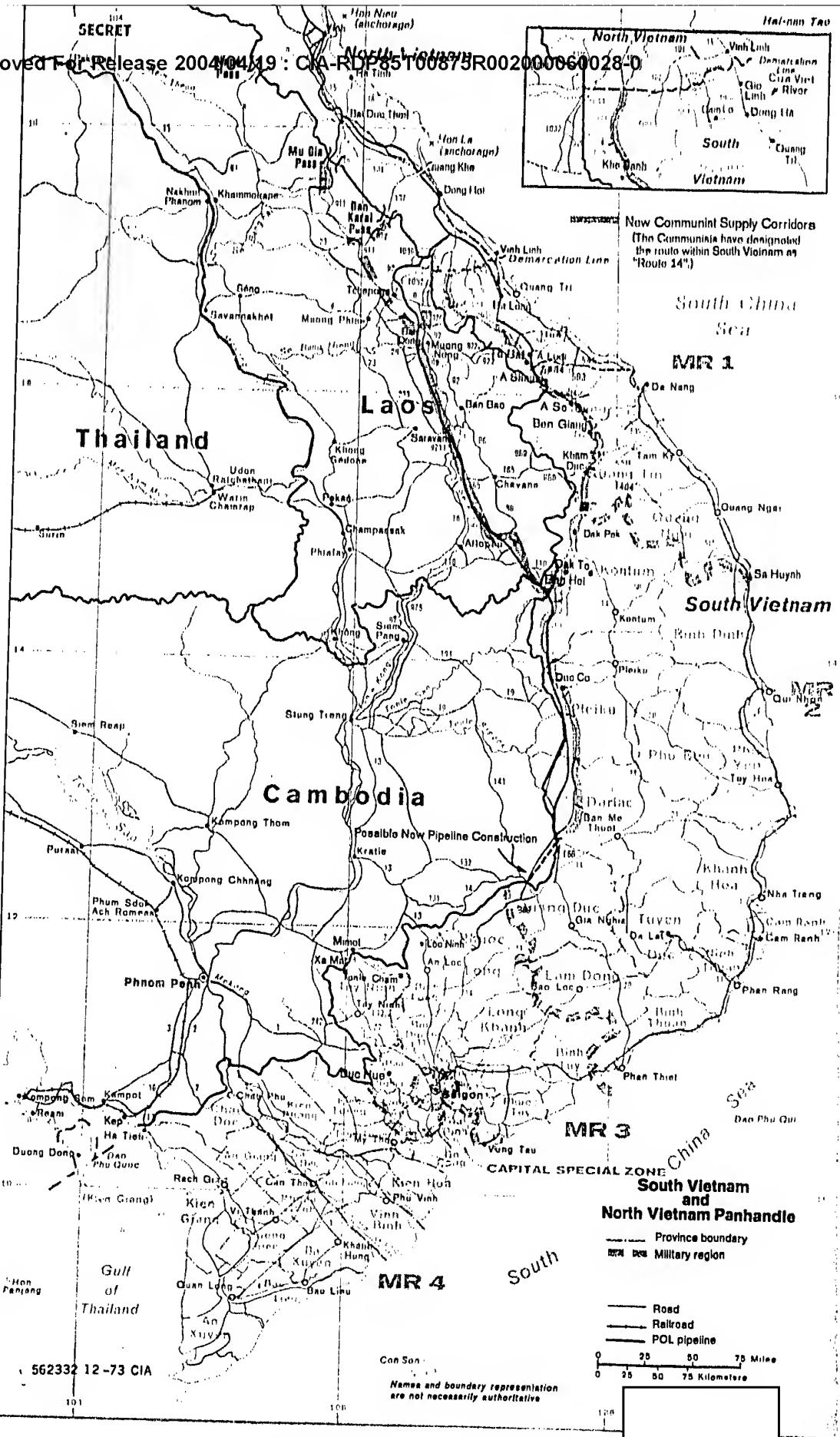
36. Virtually no change in the government's population control - as reported by the Hamlet Evaluation System (HES) - occurred during August. At the end of the month, slightly more than 78% of the population was controlled by the government, about the same percentage as at the end of July. MRs 2, 3, and 4 all showed slight declines in government control, while in MR 1 it rose 1.5%, despite the heavy fighting in Quang Nam Province. Countrywide, the proportion of the population living in contested or enemy areas also remained about the same during August - approximately 18% and 2%, respectively.

37. The August HES results show the greatest gains in government control in Long Khanh (MR 3) and Kien Giang Provinces (MR 4), whose scores rose more

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than ten percentage points each. In Long Khanh, the large increase was attributable to the absence of military activity.

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On the negative side, security in Phu Yen Province declined the most of any province in South Vietnam during August - about ten percentage points.

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